CLAIMS:

1. A method of generating an optimized route between a plurality of locations, said method including the steps of:

(a) identifying the plurality of locations;

(b) converting the locations into data representative of said plurality of locations by reference to a store of geographic data;

(c) calculating an optimized route between the plurality of locations on the basis of said representative data; and

(d) generating a series of images, each image of said series comprising a part of the optimized route between two of the identified locations.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein step (b) includes determining longitude and latitude coordinates representing each location by referring to a look-up table.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein step (d) includes automatically scaling each image on the basis of the part of the optimized route to be generated on said image.

4. The method of claim 1, further including the step of defining each point along the optimized route in terms of longitude and latitude coordinates.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the step of automatically scaling each image further includes determining maximum and minimum longitude and latitude coordinates of the optimized route.

6. The method of claim 1, further including the step of splitting an image into two or more images where an automatically determined scale of the image renders information of the image unclear or illegible to a user.

7. The method of claim 6, further including the step of a user selecting one or more features along the optimized route at which to split the image.

8. The method of claim 1, further including the step of generating one or more advertisements on one or more parts of one or more of the images.

9. The method of claim 8, further including the step of selecting one or more of the advertisements on the basis of a region represented by the image.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein an origin and/or a destination of the optimized route are automatically specified prior to calculating the optimized route.

11. The method of claim 1, further including the step of specifying one of said plurality of locations to be the first destination of the optimized route.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein step (c) includes preserving an order of the plurality of locations and optimising the route between each location.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein each image is a map printed onto a separate sheet of printable media.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein each image is a visual electronic representation of a map stored on a portable electronic device.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein step (a) includes specifying a customer identifier to identify a location by reference to a store of customer data.

16. An apparatus for generating an optimized route between a plurality of locations, said apparatus comprising:

processing means coupled to be in communication with:

input means for identifying the plurality of locations;

storage means for storing geographic data;

a data handling engine for converting the locations into data representative of said plurality of locations by reference to said storage means;

a route calculating engine for calculating an optimized route between the plurality of locations on the basis of said representative data;

an image rendering engine for generating a series of images, each image of said series comprising a part of the optimized route between two of the identified locations; and

output means for outputting said series of images.

17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said storage means comprises a look-up table of longitude and latitude coordinates representing each location.

18. The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising a scaling engine for automatically scaling each image on the basis of the part of the optimized route to be represented on said image.

19. The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising a store of customer data to identify at least one of the locations on the basis of a customer identifier.

20. The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising an advertising engine for selecting one or more advertisements to be added to one or more images.

21. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said input means is a graphical user interface.

22. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said input means is a touch sensitive screen.